WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Disinvestment Commission

*501. DR. D. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether setting up of Disinvestment Commission has been cleared by Government;

(b) if so, whether the Chairman and the members of the Commission have been appointed;

(c) what will be its main functions; and

(d) by what time it is likely to start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (d) The Government have already set up a Disinvestment Commission and have appointed a full-time Chairman and four-part-time Members. The Commission has started functioning. The Commission is to advise the Government on various aspects related to disinvestment like timing, extent, pricing, mode etc.

World Bank's concern over declining female-male sex ratio

*502. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAIHATA: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank has expressed concern over the declining female-male ratio in India;

(b) whether it has pointed out that the high number of missing Indian women and high mortality rate of girl child under five are some of the top worries;

(c) if so, whether the World Bank report in this regard has been accepted by Government;

(d) what are the suggestions made in the said report; and

(e) to what extent they are likely to be implemented?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA): (a) Yes, Sir. The World Bank in its report titled 'Improving Women's health in India—Development in Practice has inter-alia mentioned that India is one of the countries where males significantly outnumber females; and that the sex ratio of the population has become increasingly weighted towards men.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Report inter-alia has mentioned marked regional variations, the worsening of male/female mortality ratio. For children aged 0-4 in a number of States, and the persistence of excess mortality among women of Child bearing age.

(c) The contents of the Report have been noted.

(d) The said Report in its Chapter 'Strategies for Change' has recommended strong and sustained government commitment, a favourable policy environment and well-targetted resources. The report focusses on improving the health of Indian Women and girls through Public and private health care and related sources. Long-term improvements in education and employment opportunities for women would have a positive impact on the health of Indian Women and their children. In the short-term significant improvements can be expected by improving existing services expending them to meet women's needs. The most cost effective interventions in the health sector are those that improve the health of children and of women of reproductive age. The Report further recommends that through legislation, legal enforcement, and information, education and communication (IEC) harmful practices such as domestic violence and discrimination can be curbed Involvement of Non-Goyernmental Organisations and Women's groups are expected to make services more responsive to Women and improve utilisation and impacts.

(e) Various programmes of action and advocacy are being implemented by the